

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY 382nd  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS March 27, 2014**

**A meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority (hereinafter referred to as "Authority", the "CCA" or the "Board") was held on March 27, 2014 pursuant to notice, at the Rhode Island Convention Center, One LaSalle Square, Providence, Rhode Island.**

**Board members present were Jim Bennett, George Nee, Dale Venturini, Jeffrey Hirsh, Scott Gunn, Joe DeLorenzo, Stan Israel, Tony Mendez, and Patrick Butler.**

**Mr. MacDonald and Ms. Carter were unable to attend.**

**Also present were James P. McCarvill, Executive Director, Kim Keough, Donald Nadeau and Betty Sullivan, Rhode Island Convention Center Authority; Larry Lepore, John McGinn, Kathy Masino, Katrina Delicato, Amanda Wilmouth, Nancy Beauchamp, Arlene Oliva, Cheryl Cohen, John Ciolfi, Robert Cappalli, Abby Ortiz and David Krapf, Complex; Dan Schwartz, The VETS; Kristin McGrath and Martha Sheridan, CVB; Lynn Singleton and Alan Chille, PFM; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Robert Bromley, Senate Fiscal Office; Joseph Solomon, House Policy Office and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.**

**Mr. Bennett called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February Board Meeting. Upon**

**a motion duly made by Mr. DeLorenzo and seconded by Mr. Hirsh it was unanimously**

**VOTED: to approve the minutes of the February Board Meeting.**

**Mr. Bennett asked Mr. McCarvill to present the financial information. Mr. McCarvill reported that for the month of February the Convention Center's net income variance was (\$178,216) to budget and (\$160,105) to the prior year. Year to date net income for the Convention Center was (\$179,943) to budget and \$269,920 to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill stated that higher than anticipated salaries, benefits and operational labor continue to impact net income. Mr. McCarvill reported that the VETS net income for the month of February was (\$54,629) to budget and (\$5,738) to the prior year. Year to date net income was (\$80,446) to budget and (\$68,888) to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill noted that there were 3 fewer events than budgeted for the month. Mr. McCarvill said that the VETS is headed in the right direction and is looking forward to a very active spring season. Mr. McCarvill reported that for the month of February the Dunkin' Donuts Center's net income variance was (\$126,680) to budget and \$64,656 to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill noted that year to date net income for the Dunkin' Donuts Center was (\$433,351) to budget and (\$34,210) to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill reported that fewer events were held at the Dunk than budgeted. Mr. McCarvill noted that some events that were budgeted for February did not take place until March. Mr. McCarvill reported that the Convention Center Authority's net income variance for the**

month of February was \$7,136 to budget and \$12,547 to the prior year. Year to date net income for the Authority was \$156,629 to budget and (\$28,768) to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill stated that consolidated net income variance for the month of February was (\$352,389) to budget and (\$88,640) to the prior year. Year to date consolidated net income was (\$537,104) to budget and \$138,053 to the prior year. Mr. Gunn questioned budgeted events that did not take place and asked if they would happen in the future. Mr. McCarvill said that the budget is prepared prior to the schedules for our tenants. Mr. McCarvill also reported that the Convention Center should exceed budget this fiscal year. Mr. Bennett asked if we could close the financial gap over the next 4 months. Mr. McCarvill stated that we could cut some expenses from the Convention Center but it is not likely that we can find enough to make a significant difference. Mr. Nee noted that in the past we had some disagreements with the budget office and asked Mr. McCarvill if that is still the case. Mr. McCarvill answered that it is different post hotel. He said that now they mostly just want us to pay our bills.

Mr. Bennett asked for a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Nee and seconded by Mr. Mendez it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to accept the financial report as presented.

Mr. Bennett stated that Mr. Singleton would like to address the Board

regarding ticket re-sellers and the legislation that has been introduced that would provide some consumer protection from unscrupulous practices. Mr. Singleton noted that some issues have arisen regarding re-sellers that advertise exclusive tickets to events that have not yet been put on sale. He said that they lead the public to believe that the tickets are being purchased through the venues web site. Mr. Singleton reported that the consumer pays a premium for seats and the venue hears the complaints if the location of the seats is not as expected or the seats were sold to multiple individuals. Mr. Nee asked what happens to someone already has the promised seats. Mr. Singleton said that they try to accommodate the patron with other locations or other performances. Mr. Butler asked what would happen if the legislation passed. Mr. Singleton said that protections would be put in place to safeguard against fraud in the market. Mr. DeLorenzo stated that we already have a law against scalping. Mr. Lepore said that we do but the law says that the transaction has to take place in Rhode Island. Mr. Hirsh asked what the consensus is in the general assembly. Mr. Singleton responded that the feedback has been positive. Mr. Gunn said that he is all for consumer protection but that he has never had an issue with re-sellers like StubHub. Mr. Mendez asked why people would pay extra for a ticket. Mr. Singleton said that some of the web-sites appear to be the venue's site or they are lead to believe that the event is sold out. Mr. Gunn asked if SMG has a position on the issue. Mr. Lepore stated that SMG is looking for Federal legislation. Upon a motion to support the legislation, made by Mr. Butler and seconded

**by Nee it was**

**VOTED to make known our support of the legislation**

**Yes votes**

**Mr. Bennett, Mr. Nee, Ms. Venturini, Mr. Hirsh, Mr. DeLorenzo, Mr. Israel, Mr. Mendez and Mr. Butler**

**Mr. Gunn abstained**

**Ms. Keough addressed the Board and reported that 10 responses to the RFP for an Economic Impact Study were received and that she narrowed the field to 4. Ms. Keough stated that the fees range from \$25,000 to \$66,000. Ms. Keough noted that she had shared the responses with Ms. Venturini and that they would be doing their due diligence in vetting the responses. Mr. Hirsh asked if CSL would discount their fee because they have already worked with the CVB and have working knowledge of the project. Mr. McCarvill said that they might but that we have not contacted any of the firms to negotiate because we are not looking to spend any money before July. Ms. Keough reported that the web-site has been stalled because of an issue at Carbon House.**

**Ms. Sheridan distributed the CVB report. Ms. Sheridan reported that the bad weather has greatly impacted hotel occupancy. Ms. Sheridan**

also reported that two annual meetings shifted their meeting dates to other months which also contributed to the decline in occupancy. Ms. Sheridan reported on sales activity for the month of February and noted that definite bookings are up to last year although definite room nights are lower. Ms. Sheridan noted that tentative bookings and room nights are higher. Ms. Sheridan stated that Convention Center definite bookings and definite room nights increased over the same month last year. Ms. Sheridan was pleased to noted that the Church of the Pentecost and the New England Tactical Officers Association have booked events for 2014 and the Society of St. Vincent DePaul National Assembly has confirmed for 2015. Convention Center tentative bookings include the Society for the Study of Evolution, the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American Orff-Schulwerk Association, American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society and the International Association of Assessing Officers. Ms. Sheridan reported that CVB sales team attended Destination Showcase in Washington, DC, the Convention Sales Professional International conference and the Association Management Companies Institute conference. Ms. Sheridan reported that the annual Ambassador Luncheon, to recognize the local support that we get from the community took place last week Mr. Mendez asked if that is only a once a year event. Ms. Sheridan said that mostly it is although we have had some events where recognition is given to the Ambassador Program or an Ambassador. Ms. Sheridan presented a marketing and communications update and announced that April 12th has been designated as Do Over Day. She said that

because the weather has been so cold, snowy and miserable and plans were canceled for special occasions including Valentines Day, April 12th is the day that everyone should take the opportunity to Do Over whatever plans were interfered with or canceled.

Mr. Bennett reported that Providence has been chosen as the most exciting small livable city. Ms. Sheridan stated that that is a great message to send and that we also do very well on the food front.

Mr. McCarvill noted that he had asked Senator Reed to caution his colleagues regarding meetings and travel. He asked that Senator Reed use his influence when discussing business travel. Ms. Venturini stated that our delegation has always understood the importance of travel and tourism to our area and, unlike some other delegations, make time to meet with us here or in Washington.

Mr. Lepore reported that he has notified Live Nation and AEG that we will be self promoting events. Mr. Lepore said that we will pursue every opportunity. He noted that diner shows will be held at the Convention Center and that three shows have been booked. Mr. Lepore said that we have an opportunity to explore new markets and diversify use of the Convention Center space and staff expertise. Mr. Lepore said that according to the newspaper the Atlantic 10 Conference is looking for a new home for their tournament. He said that we would reach out to the conference and offer them a home at the Dunk. Mr. Butler asked if the NCAA looks at attendance and ticket

sales when deciding where to place their games. Mr. Lepore said that it is all about television and attendance is not a priority. Mr. Lepore reported that event parking will be pushed after the garage gets a good spring cleaning. He noted that we do now advertise parking on the marquis.

Mr. Lepore introduced March's employees of the month. Abby Ortiz has been an employee since 1993 when she began at age 16 as a concession worker. Abby is a dedicated employee that takes pride in her job and is well liked by her co-workers. David Krapf, a member of the Convention Center security team since 2007 is known for his exemplary service and was recently promoted to training sergeant. David ensures the integrity and safety of our complex. Congratulations to Abby and David

Mr. Schwartz distributed the latest report for the Vets. Mr. Schwartz began his report but was interrupted because some Commissioners had other engagements and there was an agenda item that required a vote.

Discussion ensued regarding the Wayfinding Project. Mr. Bennett noted that a vote had been postponed in February. Ms. Venturini stated that the Downtown Improvement District and the Providence Foundation are waiting for a response from the Authority before issuing an RFP for the signs. Mr. Bennett asked if the Authority had the money to fund the request. Mr. McCarvill stated that it is not in



our current budget but we could include it in the budget for 2015 and contribute \$36,000 at \$1,000 per month for 36 months. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Gunn and seconded by Mr. DeLorenzo it was

**VOTED:** to approve the addition of \$12,000 per year for three years to as our contribution to the Wayfinding project.

**Yes votes**

**Mr. Bennett, Ms. Venturini, Mr. Hirsh, Mr. DeLorenzo, Mr. Mendez, Mr. Butler and Mr. Gunn.**

**Mr. Nee and Mr. Israel voted no.**

**Mr. Nee took the opportunity to recognize Donald Nadeau who has been a loyal employee of the Convention Center Authority for twenty years. Mr. Nee noted that Donald has been the Authority's accountant during all that time and is a very hard working dedicated employee. Mr. Bennett introduced Donald. The Commissioners congratulated Mr. Nadeau**

**Mr. Lepore announced that he is investigating the possibility of putting an Ice Village in the back parking lot of the Dunk for a winter event. Discussion ensued regarding the possibilities.**

**Mr. Bennett asked if there was any other business. Hearing none he asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Nee and seconded by Mr. Gunn it was unanimously**

**VOTED: to adjourn at 10:35 AM**